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School Committee Minutes 05/13/2008

Approved by School Committee May 27, 2008

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, May 13, 2008
7:30 PM

Present: School Committee Members

Denise Burns, Chair Sue Sheffler, Joe Curran, Vice Chair Ronald Spangler, Secretary Joe Curro, Jeff Thielman, Leba Heigham.

Superintendent: Nate Levenson, Asst. Superintendent: Kathleen Bodie, Chief Financial Off: Sue Mazzarella

Absent:

Interim Sp. Ed. Dir: Gerald Kupperschmidt, Student Rep. Callie McHugh, Student Rep. Bobby McWatters

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Jack Duranceu AEA President, spoke on arbitration proceedings involving Mr. Coughlin and Ms. Bouris and recommends to the committee that the transcripts of the proceedings should be read before anyone makes public statements about the situation. He also noted that it was the Arlington Public Schools delaying and prolonging the arbitration proceedings and requesting that expenses related to the case be given.

RECOGNITION

Thompson School students in grades one, two and four have on display their artwork in the School Committee room for the month of May.

Ms. Burns noted The Touchdown Club Ostergren Award Banquet was held last Thursday evening May 8, 2008. Congratulations to Ryan Sheehan and Emily Pillemer, winners of this years' Ostergren Award. Speaker's included among others Curry College football coach Skip Bardini, who encouraged the athletes to step up to leadership roles, stay away from drugs and alcohol, and to do their very best to succeed in life.

CONSENT AGENDA – all items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

*Approval of minutes from School Committee Meeting April 29, 2008

*Approval of Warrant #08149 dated April 29, 2008 in the amount of \$214,233.34

*Approval of Second Reading of Policy Dissemination, School Committee Legislative Program, Budget Transfer Authority, CJ: Administrative Intern Program, BIE: School Committee Member Insurance and BIA-E: New School Committee Member Orientation

On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Curran it was motioned to accept the consent agenda with Mr. Curro amending the motion to take out Policy BIA –E, New School Committee Member Orientation. Vote 7:0

On a motion by Mr. Curro and seconded by Mr. Spangler it was motioned to make administrative change on page two of policy BIA-E to insert word School to Massachusetts Associations of

Committees, to read Massachusetts Associations of School Committees. (MASC). Mr. Curro motioned to amend the amendment to include current, approved and any revised superintendent's contracts to be included with the new members materials received at their orientation meeting. Ms. Heigham adding that All current and revised contracts of Superintendent, as well as Chief Financial Officer, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Special Education should be included in the materials as well as ALL contracts between the Arlington School Committee and collect bargaining and/or employees.

Vote 7:0

Ms. Burns would like to refer this policy BIA-E to subcommittee for additional review.

Mr. Thielman motioned to have policy BIA-E referred to Policy and Procedures subcommittee for review of policy and format with Mr. Curran seconded the motion.

Vote 7:0

ELL PRESENTATION

Ms. Jill McCarthy, ELL Program Director, K-12 updated the committee on the how her staff has continued to work the last three years to achieve and maintain the program compliance across the district. Ms. McCarthy noted with the diversity in languages in Arlington comes different cultures, which also creates opportunities for our community. Ms. McCarthy stressed that regular education teachers are continuing to be trained to support ELL students, and has been done with on-site enrichment classes for middle and high school teachers taught by Jill and Charlie Skidmore. This was designed to help school teachers learn how to adapt to their instruction so they can work successfully with the English language learners. With assessment and trained teachers, this process can help to identify students who might need longer support in the ELL program rather than special education services, as previously thought.

The committee members were in agreement to keep the ELL program as one of its goals for next school year. As Ms. McCarthy noted the communication between ELL families and the district needs to improve. Mr. Curro mentioned the many resources, such as the world language network; and within our own community we should be able to find the support needed to improve communication on a volunteer basis.

CHAIR REPORT

Ms. Burns asked the committee members to hold the date of June 26, 2008 for the Town Financial Summit. The entire School Committee, Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee will be meeting to look forward in the budget planning process.

Ms. Burns noted reports of vandalism at Pierce field and asked Mr. Brian Sullivan, Town Manager to include Jeff Thielman, Chair of Community Relations Subcommittee, in meetings on this matter.

Ms. Burns entertained a motion with Leba Heigham and Mr. Curro seconded the motion to refer AHS and Pierce field security issues to Community Relations Subcommittee and to come back with a recommendation.

Vote 7:0

RESEARCH AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY GROUP FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

Ms. Wallis Raemer, Dallin School principal and ACE Director presented on Meeting the Needs of Gifted Students in Arlington. Other study group members included Jill Connor, Sheri Donovan, Siobhan Foley, Annette Brubaker, Andrea Campbell, Mies Boet Whitaker, Amy Duke, Henry Olds, Mary Brooks, Judi Bohn and Kathy Bodie. Ms. Raemer addressed the committee with the research and the findings of the study group. They found that they would like to offer the gifted students enrichment activities during and after school, support the social and emotional needs of gifted students, offer pilot math groups in elementary schools that are cost neutral, explore early identification, compare with other schools on how they include enrichment programs and how they are implemented. They would also like the 2008-2009 school year to include a plan on professional development on gifted and talented education and to apply for a DOE grant that could fund this program.

The committee members were asking how students are identified and how do we satisfy the needs for all the students with our financial challenges. Ms. Raemer noted some examples to identify gifted and talented students are common assessments as well as other testing. The common assessments show students with above grade levels in reading, writing, science and math. These 4th and 5th grade students would enter into the multi intelligent curriculum unit best suited for them. With the support of administration and the committee, the study groups are continuing to be creative in strategies to continue support gifted and talented students. The presentation of Meeting the Needs of Gifted Students in Arlington is posted to our website.

BREAK

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Discussion regarding ongoing Arbitration

**Ms. Burns entertained the motion to enter into Executive Session at 9:50 pm and seconded by Mr. Curran.
Roll Call: Ms. Heigham Yes, Mr. Curro Yes, Ms. Sheffler Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Spangler No, Mr. Curran Yes, Ms. Burns Yes
Vote 6-1 with Mr. Spangler voting No**

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Superintendent Levenson reported on the nursing grant of \$80,000 the district would receive for the next five years to support software and increase the number of nurses. He also reported on the coalition that was held last week at Town Hall and the input from this will certainly be reflected in program changes currently offered to students.

BRAINSTORMING ON QUESTIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS WANT ANSWERED ON NEXT MEETING TOPICS: May 27th

Middle School scheduling and reflection on Middle School self-reflection.

Ms. Burns would like the following questions answered: How many staff members were involved in the process? If middle school staff is in support of the findings? How middle school scheduling will impact the self-reflection? What resources they need to be successful?

Grade 6 -8 Reading Plan for FY 09

Superintendent Levenson gave Ms. Burns background information on the current reading plan and noted we are currently focused on grades 3-5. The Reading Plan for FY 09 we plan to support struggling readers in the middle school. Ms. Burns would like to know for the next meeting how common assessments come into play before they hit middle school and how they plan to evaluate success.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Curran reported on the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee meeting held on May 1, 2008. Mr. Curran acknowledged that Mr. Russo spoke during public participation, on our policy on opt in to sex education rather than opt out and would like additional explanation of our current Health Program. Ms. Sheffler, Ms. Bouvier and others had meet with Mr. Russo over the past couple of years on similar discussions and would like him to meet with the superintendent..

**Mr. Curran motioned to have the full committee refer to the Curriculum Subcommittee to investigate specific facts contained in the health curriculum specific to factual accuracy of Sexual Education
Vote 5-2 motion fails**

**Mr. Thielman motioned to direct the superintendent to see Mr. Russo and to provide curriculum information on specific facts on curriculum with Mr. Spangler seconded this motion.
Vote 7:0**

SECRETARY REPORT

Mr. Spangler reported on the documents received from Attorney Grannon regarding Winter Street lease. Other correspondence reported on was the Staff Recognition notice, Nurse Recognition, Metco Legislative Alert notice, Memorial Day notice at Ottoson Middle School and the Capital Planning Committee notice to Town Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

**Ms. Sheffler motioned to refer that the Budget Subcommittee review the cost of homeless transportation with Mr. Thielman seconded the motion.
Vote 7:0**

Ms. Burns noted that Mr. Curran would be chair of next School Committee meeting and that she and Superintendent Levenson will be out of town.

ADJOURN

**On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Curran it was
Vote to adjourn at 10:45 pm.**

Vote 7:0

Submitted by
Karen Fitzgerald
Administrative Assistant
School Committee